

SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE, MAY 2026

We're almost halfway through the year, and I have returned with another update. There has been significant academic and professional progress on my end. Incredibly grateful for the support and opportunities I have received from my supervisors and the Mabula Ground Hornbill Project, made possible by the Alf Rewin Scholarship. I led my first field trip to the Limpopo River Valley for annual nest checks, including the planning and execution of the entire trip. I attended a practical avian first aid course facilitated by Katja Koepfel and Michelle Otto with the University of Pretoria, which covered topics from avian capture and handling to sample collection and preservation.



Figure 1: Newcastle's Disease Vaccinations under Vet Supervision

I have also completed a short course on the Essence of SANS 10386, facilitated by the Scientific Veterinary Council, as I work toward obtaining SAVC authorisation, an important competency for my PhD research project.



Figure 2: Certificate of Completion for SAVC accredited course

The Project is also currently involved in various projects, including testing out tracking devices on reintroduced birds to gain insight on their movements within their now transformed landscape. I have been lucky enough to be a part of the research project and continue to learn a great deal.



Figure 3: Released individual fitted with tracking device

I am currently writing up the ethics applications for the proposed research chapters, which I hope will be approved to start fieldwork as soon as possible. With this, I hope to bring a report deep in the field to uncover mysteries that still lie with this enigmatic species.

All my best

Pluto